



U.S. President's Malaria Initiative



## INFORM ASIA: USAID HEALTH RESEARCH PROGRAM (ASSOCIATE AWARD 2)

Malaria, HIV, tuberculosis, pandemic influenza and other emerging infectious diseases pose a significant public health threat throughout Asia, and in particular, the Greater Mekong Sub-region. Inform Asia: the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Health Research Program generates and applies strategic, scientifically sound data for health programming in the region. Headquartered in Bangkok, Inform Asia, implemented by RTI International, is a five-year program that works with the Ministries of Health and implementation partners in the region to conduct research focused on strengthening health systems and promoting the use of evidence-based data for decision-making and policy. The program currently focuses on malaria in Thailand and Lao PDR.

More than half of the populations of Thailand and Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) live in malaria-endemic areas and are at risk of infection and disease. Through funding from the U.S. President's Malaria Initiative (PMI), the project provides technical support to the National Malaria Control Programs in Thailand and Lao PDR to strengthen malaria surveillance systems and generate information and evidence to improve implementation and inform policies for malaria elimination. Inform Asia's team of locally and internationally-recognized malaria experts, epidemiologists, researchers and program managers assists national malaria programs and Ministries of Health to better target resources for those most at-risk and deliver cost-effective malaria interventions through the use of strategic information and surveillance.

### IMPACT AND RESULTS:

Inform Asia works to continually put forward evidence that can lead to better health outcomes and supportive health policies. As part of its contributions to malaria elimination efforts, the program has:

- Fostered a strong partnership with the Bureau of Vector Borne Diseases under the Thai Ministry of Public Health and conducted a cost-benefit analysis to advocate for domestic resources for malaria elimination. The analysis demonstrates that an investment of one Thai Baht for malaria elimination can yield a return of 15 Thai Baht.

PHOTO CREDIT: THAILAND BUREAU OF VECTOR BORNE DISEASES

- Provided technical assistance for the integration of case-based malaria information into a single comprehensive, national database (Malaria Online) and the deployment of web-based tools and analytics for more cost-efficient planning and decision-making;
- Improved substantially the user interface of Thailand's malaria information system through easy-to-use dashboards to monitor the notification of malaria patients within 24 hours, track case investigations within three days, and response within seven days, including automated malaria foci classification and mapping;
- Supported quality assurance and documentation of the therapeutic efficacy studies in Thailand implemented by the World Health Organization, including support for an integrated drug efficacy surveillance module to monitor treatment outcomes of all malaria cases which will serve as model for other malaria-eliminating countries to monitor drug resistance.

## **PARTNERS**

Inform Asia is implemented by RTI International. The program collaborates with the Bureau of Vector Borne Diseases and Bureau of Epidemiology, Ministry of Public Health, Thailand; Center for Malariology, Parasitology and Entomology, Ministry of Health, Lao PDR; WHO Global Malaria Program, WHO Country Offices, Thailand and Lao PDR.

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